



# **RIDGE AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**A WALKING TOUR**

The early history of Idaho Falls revolved around transportation and canals. Idaho Falls began as Taylor's Crossing on the Snake River in 1864–1865 when Matt Taylor constructed a bridge to serve miners and freighters moving supplies from Salt Lake City to gold fields in Montana and northern Idaho. Soon after the bridge was built, Robert Anderson and his brother, J.D., opened a store and a bank at the bridge crossing. In June, 1872, the citizens of the small community, believing its name implied a "wide place in the road," changed its name to Eagle Rock. Beginning in 1873, the Utah Northern Railroad began to extend north from Brigham City, Utah, and reached Eagle Rock in March, 1879. The early settlement grew as work crews came to Eagle Rock to build shops and complete repairs on the railroad. In 1882, the little community boasted it had 670 residents. But when the repair shops were moved to Pocatello, the boasting soon turned to fear for the future.

However, after 1880 major canal systems had begun to transform the upper Snake River Valley from a desert and cross-roads to an agricultural region, and the community that was to be renamed Idaho Falls was assured a future. The Anderson Canal, which waters approximately 6,000 acres, was built during the years of 1879 and 1880 by the Anderson Brothers and others. In 1884, canal construction was begun by the Eagle Rock and Willow Creek Company. In 1891, the Great Western Canal and Improvement Company was conceived by Bernard McCaffrey, a developer from the midwest, to bring water to the west of Idaho Falls. By 1894 construction had begun on the Great Western and Porter Canal, and in 1900 the irrigation improvements of the Great Western Land and Irrigation Company were purchased by the New Sweden Irrigation District. These were just a few of the major canal projects to be developed in the arid region around Idaho Falls in the thirty-year period from 1880 to 1910.

During this period of canal construction, the city began to gain population. In 1891, a group of professional land promoters from the Midwest — Charles N. Lee, W. G. Emerson, D.W. Higbee, J.B. Holmes, and Bernard McCaffery — petitioned to change the name of the fledgling town to Idaho Falls.



The promise of water, and perhaps the more lucrative name of Idaho Falls, had begun to entice people to move here. The city had a population of 1,262 in 1900. It grew to 4,827 by 1910 and nearly doubled to 8,064 residents by 1920. Before 1890, the residential area of the city was confined to the area adjacent to the Snake River, south of Broadway Avenue and west of the railroad. In 1893, Wm. A.B. Crow was the first to build adjacent to Central School, the present site of the former O. E. Bell Junior High, and in 1896, the *Idaho Register* reported that, with the homes of A. D. Morrison and Marquis McKee, a building boom was beginning east of the railroad in the area now known as the Ridge Avenue Historic District.

This building was to continue on Ridge Avenue and neighboring streets for the next twenty-five years. The Ridge Avenue Historic District is a legacy that illustrates the variety of home sizes, styles, and materials eastern Idahoans used in the early twentieth century. The first homes were built with native building materials — stone and basalt. As Idaho Falls grew, native materials were replaced with wood siding and pressed brick. The Queen Anne style is prevalent in the District, but it is not the exuberant and decoratively rich towers, turrets, bays and encircling porches we associate with Queen Anne. In the District, as in most of southeastern Idaho, the Queen Anne style is conservative and ornamentation has classical rather than fanciful origins. Prominent and decorative front doors, symmetrically balanced doors and windows, and multi-paned windows are features of the Colonial Revival style, a style that was important in the State's building boom from 1902 to 1910 and therefore important in the District. Although there are a few homes influenced by Tudor Revival designs within the District, Craftsman and Prairie style provided greater guidance for later owners in the District. Craftsman or bungalow styles were popular from 1900 to 1930 and are characterized by wood materials, gently pitched gable roofs, wide unenclosed eaves, front porches with roofs supported by tapered square columns, and windows with many panes.

The first occupants of the Ridge Avenue Historic District were as varied as the homes they chose. They were from all occupations: railroad workers,



store clerks, teachers, bankers, physicians, land developers, and lawyers. Whether their home was as modest as one of the frame Queen Annes found on North Water or as impressive as G. G. Wright's brick Queen Anne on Ridge Avenue, they shared a faith in the future of their new city and left us with a neighborhood that reminds us of our beginnings. The Ridge Avenue Historic District contains 101 properties of which 65 are listed as contributing to the District. The tour of the Ridge Avenue Historic District begins on North Water, moves onto Cedar, and then onto Ridge and Placer Avenues. The complete tour takes about an hour. If you have less time, we suggest you begin your tour with number 30 on Ash Street. The tour ends at the Bonneville Museum.

**1. 313 North Water Avenue.** This was one of the first homes built east of the railroad. It was built by Isreal Vadboncoeur, stone mason, in 1896-97 for George Changnon, station master of the Oregon Short Line Railroad. The Craftsman-style porch with its massive brick piers was added twenty years after the home was built. After Changnon sold the home, it was used as a mortuary.

**2. 327 North Water Avenue.** Early city directories list Dr. G. W. Cleary as the resident of this simple Queen Anne style home with spindlework porch supports. It was built between 1903 and 1905.



**3. 343 North Water Avenue.** This duplicate of its Queen Anne neighbor was an early home of Ralph A. Louis, mayor of Idaho Falls from 1917 to 1919 and 1921 to 1927.

**4. 344 North Water Avenue.** This interesting home with its steeply pitched roof, inset porch, and arched opening was occupied during the early part of this century by Richard and Sadie Barry.

**387 N. Water.** Edward P. Coltman, owner of Coltman Lumber Company, built this home with a hipped pyramidal roof and eight dormers prior to 1903. Coltman was the mayor of Idaho Falls from 1904 to 1907 and from 1909 to 1910. The photo in the left hand corner of this brochure is an early photo of the Coltman home.



**5. 400 North Eastern Avenue.** Built as a boarding house, this Queen Anne with classical detailing was built from cement block, a building material introduced for residential construction at the turn of the century. W. Jay Brown, the owner of the Idaho Cafe, was the first owner.

**6. 422 North Eastern Avenue.** This front gabled home with full front porch was built by W. Jay Brown, probably as a rental for those who worked on the railroad or downtown.

**7. 468 North Eastern.** This unusual and modest example of Craftsman style homes, with its multi-paned windows and square wood supports, was built between 1911 and 1921.



**8. 156 Poplar.** This simple Queen Anne cottage, with a full front porch with spindlework supports, was built by William P. Dawe as a rental. This cottage retains a high degree of integrity.

**9. 491 North Water.** William P. Dawe, an early occupant of this home, was the City Clerk of Idaho Falls. This home has wood siding with corner boards and a portico supported by brackets over the door.

**10. 477 North Water Avenue.** Dr. T. M. Bridges, a partner of Dr. Franklin LaRue, built this home prior to 1903. Its full porch with spindlework supports and frieze makes this home unique in the District.



**11. 478 North Water Avenue.** This small brick home with fishscale shingles on the gable was built by Ellen Moen in 1903. The entrance to the second floor room was originally from an exterior stairwell only.

**12. 461 North Water Avenue.** The 1910 City Directory lists F. H. Hollister as the occupant of this home with corner boards and fishscale shingles on the gables.

**460 North Water.** This two story building was built as a boarding house by Thomas and Mary Wilson in the early 1900's. The stone is basalt.

**13. 440 North Water Avenue.** Charles W. Mulhall, real estate, loans, and insurance, was an early occupant of this simple Queen Anne built before 1903.

**14. 408 North Water Avenue.** This home with its interesting round windows, fishscale on the gables, and corner boards was the Leslie B. Murphy home. Mr. Murphy was a partner in Clay and Murphy, an automobile dealership.



**15. 409 North Water Avenue.** One of the first homes east of the railroad, this home was built by Marquis L. McKee, a teamster originally from Illinois, in the late 1890's. With its steeply pitched cross-gabled roof, McKee chose a design influenced by Queen Anne styles. McKee also built the apartments, "McKee Flats," to the rear of his home.



**16. 233-241 Cedar Street.** This Craftsman duplex conveys a strong sense of its style with its

cross-gabled porches, massive concrete piers, and wood railing. It was built between 1915 and 1921 by Leslie B. Murphy.

**17. 255 Cedar Street.** Henry Scarborough built this one-story bungalow strongly influenced by Craftsman styling around 1915. It has a partial front porch with square wood piers and multi-paned windows.

**18. 406 North Ridge Avenue.** Wilford D. Huffaker was an early occupant of this front gabled Queen Anne with fishscale shingles and spindlework detailing under the gables. The exterior stairway has always been on the home. Mr. Huffaker was president of Iona Mercantile Company and served as Chairman of the Board of Bonneville County Commissioners.

**19. 460 North Ridge Avenue.** The 1911 City Directory lists Barzilla W. Clark, vice-president and manager of Thousand Springs Land and Irrigation Company, as the occupant of this brick bungalow. As its neighbor, the home has changed very little since Clark occupied it and retains a high degree of integrity. Its curved railing adds a unique feature to its bungalow styling. Clark served as Mayor of Idaho Falls from 1913 to 1915 and from 1927 to 1936. He was governor of Idaho from 1936 to 1937.

**20. 482 - 486 North Ridge Avenue.** Built around 1915, this one and one-half story duplex strongly conveys a sense of its time and place with its wood shingled roof, wide overhanging eaves with brackets, clapboard siding, square wood supports on brick piers, and original doors. When Mr. Coltman built this duplex, he was the postmaster. The other side of the duplex was occupied by W. E. Collins.

**21. 498 North Ridge Avenue.** The first home built by Wilbert J. Coltman exhibits Queen Anne styling with its gabled roof with lower cross gable, clapboard siding, and fishscale shingles. The home was built before 1903, when Mr. Coltman was associated with the Western Land Company.

**22. 485 North Ridge Avenue.** Built in 1907, the Louis A. Haley residence is another example of the bungalow style with wide overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, and ribbons of windows on the second floor. The first occupant was a travel agent.

**23. 495 North Ridge Avenue.** The Thomas H. Kelly house was built around 1915. With its wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and its ribbons of three windows with four panes over one, it retains a substantial degree of its original bungalow (Craftsman) style. The first occupant was manager of Western Machinery and Equipment Company.

**24. 520 North Ridge Avenue.** Built around 1917, the George Apartments illustrate symmetrical Prairie style with wide overhanging eaves, multi-paned windows, white stone trim and terra cotta pendants. Marble wainscoting is found in the interior. In 1920, these apartments were advertised as the foremost apartments in the Northwest. The advertisements boasted that they were built at a cost of \$75,000.

**25. 527 North Ridge Avenue.** This excellent example of Tudor Revival was built by Mary McCann, whom the 1926 City Directory listed as a corsetiere. This brick home has half-timbering, multi-paned windows, and an arched opening on the front door.

**543 North Ridge Avenue.** This large two-story home with a gambrel roof and two lower cross-gambrels was built by Otto E. McCutcheon, who had been a judge in Saginaw, Michigan. Mr. McCutcheon became the attorney for the Great Western Canal Company and assisted in drafting early Idaho irrigation laws.

**26. 557 North Ridge Avenue.** The 1911-1912 City Directory lists Alvin T. Shane as a resident of this home. At the time, Shane was the Idaho Falls postmaster. He was mayor of Idaho Falls from 1903 to 1904. Note the half-timbered detailing and fishscale and diamond shingles on the upper gable extension.

**27. 573 North Ridge Avenue.** The assistant postmaster, Charles C. Wilson, was the first occupant of this good example of bungalow or Craftsman styling. The home has wide overhanging eaves with brackets, short square wood porch supports and a ribbon of one-over-one windows.

**28. 344 Poplar Street.** The third home built by Wilbert J. Coltman on this property on Ridge Avenue, this home retains its classical detailing.

**29. 798 South Boulevard.** In 1921, Dr. H. D. Spencer moved his hospital from 101 North Placer to this building. It functioned as a general hospital until 1941 when it was acquired by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Order Adoration and became Sacred Heart Hospital. After the Sacred Heart Hospital was moved in 1949, Dr. W.R. Abbott established the Idaho Falls Clinic in the former hospital. Behind the hospital and across the alley is a set of apartments built in the International Style.



**30. 425 Ash Street.** D.F. and Gladys Richards built this impressive example of Colonial Revival in 1939. The front door is accentuated by a portico which is supported by Doric columns and has a curved underside and modillions. D. F. Richards worked in Bowen Curley's American National Bank and later became president of the bank. He was also a director on the Federal Reserve Board of San Francisco.



**31. 309 North Placer Avenue.** This excellent example of Colonial Revival was built in 1907 by Herman J. Hasbrouck, an attorney from Nebraska who practiced in Idaho Falls from 1890 to 1915. He served in the Idaho Senate during the 1909-10 session. In his obituary, it was noted that he was an avid baseball player. His office, which he built on Park Avenue in 1895, is the best remaining example of the stone buildings that once dominated downtown Idaho Falls.

**32. 363 North Placer Avenue.** This is one of the newest homes in the district and was built around 1931. With its steep gabled roof, wood siding with half-timber, and windows with six panes over one, it is an excellent example of the influence of Tudor styling. The first occupant was Lynn Crandall, district engineer, Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Interior.

**33. 383 North Placer Avenue.** Built before 1905, this one and one-half story Queen Anne was the home of Albert W. Rates, partner in Vogel and Rates, meats. The front porch has been removed; however, the original classical detailing, wood siding with corner boards, and fishscale shingles of the Queen Anne styling remain.

**34. 391 North Placer Avenue.** The George H. Warner house is a simple Queen Anne with spindlework supports on the front porch. Warner was a painter, and his paint shop in the rear has been remodeled into a residence.

**35. 390 North Ridge Avenue.** Emery Owens built this Colonial Revival home in 1940. Note the clapboard siding with corner boards that resemble Doric columns. Multi-pane windows are an identifying feature of Colonial Revival homes.

**36. 370 North Ridge Avenue.** This home was built in 1917 by William Luxton, a partner in Luxton Brothers, meats. With its wide overhanging eaves, horizontal lineal pattern of bricks, and ribbons of casement windows, it is an excellent example of the influence of Prairie styling on home construction. The Prairie style was developed by a group of Chicago architects and is associated with Frank Lloyd Wright. It is a short lived style that grew, flourished, and declined in the years between 1900 and 1920.





**37. 371 North Ridge Avenue.** This impressive Queen Anne with classical detailing, including modillions and Ionic columns, was built by Gilbert G. Wright in 1909. Wright was the owner and manager of the Consolidated Wagon and Machine Company and Idaho Falls Milling Company.

**38. 353 North Ridge Avenue.** This Queen Anne with classical detailing and unusual shingled porch supports was built between 1905 and 1911 by Oscar A. Johannsen, lawyer and partner of Johannsen and Hartert, real estate and loans.

**39. 345 North Ridge Avenue.** This excellent brick bungalow with stone foundation, watertable, and lintels was built about 1914 by Orley K. Wilbur, the vice-president of Farmers and Merchants Bank.

**40. 340 North Ridge Avenue.** This unusual Queen Anne home was built by Charles A. Merriman before 1903. Later it was the home of Clifford Holz, president of Holz Cigar and Tobacco Company. Notice the classical detailing on the window below the gable.

**41. 312 North Ridge Avenue.** Eugene Wright occupied this home around 1920. This locally unusual example of Colonial Revival, with its gambrel roof with front shed dormers and front porch with tapered wood columns, replaced an earlier home on the same site. Wright was the president of Wright Mercantile Company.



**42. 288 North Ridge Avenue.** Frank and Minnie Hitt built this home around 1903. It is a good example of Queen Anne with Craftsman detailing. Mrs. Hitt began working at Anderson Brothers Bank at age 17 when she arrived in Eagle Rock. She continued banking for sixty years and is remembered

for her great faith in people and excellent judgment in making loans.

**43. 262 North Ridge Avenue.** This home with Craftsman influences was built between 1905 and 1911 by Harrison Linger, an attorney. These multi-pane windows, which are crucial to the style of most Craftsman homes, are unusually small.



**44. 325 Elm Street.** The First Presbyterian Church was designed by J. C. Fulton of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and is almost an exact replica of a church designed by him in Uniontown. It is an example of the Neo-Classical Revival style with an impressive dome and Ionic portico and was completed in 1920. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

**45. 310 Elm Street.** Clinton G. Peck built this Queen Anne with its delicate spindlework porch supports and fishscale shingles around 1901. He was a cashier at The State Bank.



**46. 346 Elm Street.** John W. Dill, architect, built this fine example of a Craftsman home between 1911 and 1921. Its wide overhanging eaves with decorative rafters, massive porch supports, and prominent curved railing are distinctive characteristics of Craftsman influences.

**47. 197 North Placer Avenue.** In 1908 Frank Sheppard built this Craftsman style home. The front gabled porch on Elm Street with short wood supports on massive stone piers retains substantial integrity.

**48. 173 North Placer Avenue.** This brick bungalow with a stone foundation and watertable has an unusual false balcony on the upper floor window. The first occupant was Flora Keddle, widow of Robert, who was a blacksmith.

**49. 135 North Placer Avenue.** Edward Rowles, president of Rowles-Mack Company, men's clothing, built this fine example of Colonial Revival. Note the interesting classical detailing on the sun porch, the substantial gabled portico with columns, and the multi-pane windows.



**50. 101 North Placer Avenue.** In 1910 Dr. Fuller operated the Fuller and Soderquist Hospital from his home. On this unique Queen Anne, the classical ornamentation of columns dominates the structure. In 1917, Dr. H. D. Spencer bought the home and practice. Both Mrs. Fuller and Mrs. Spencer found entertaining on the third floor awkward when guests climbed the stairs through the surgical second floor to the planned entertainment.

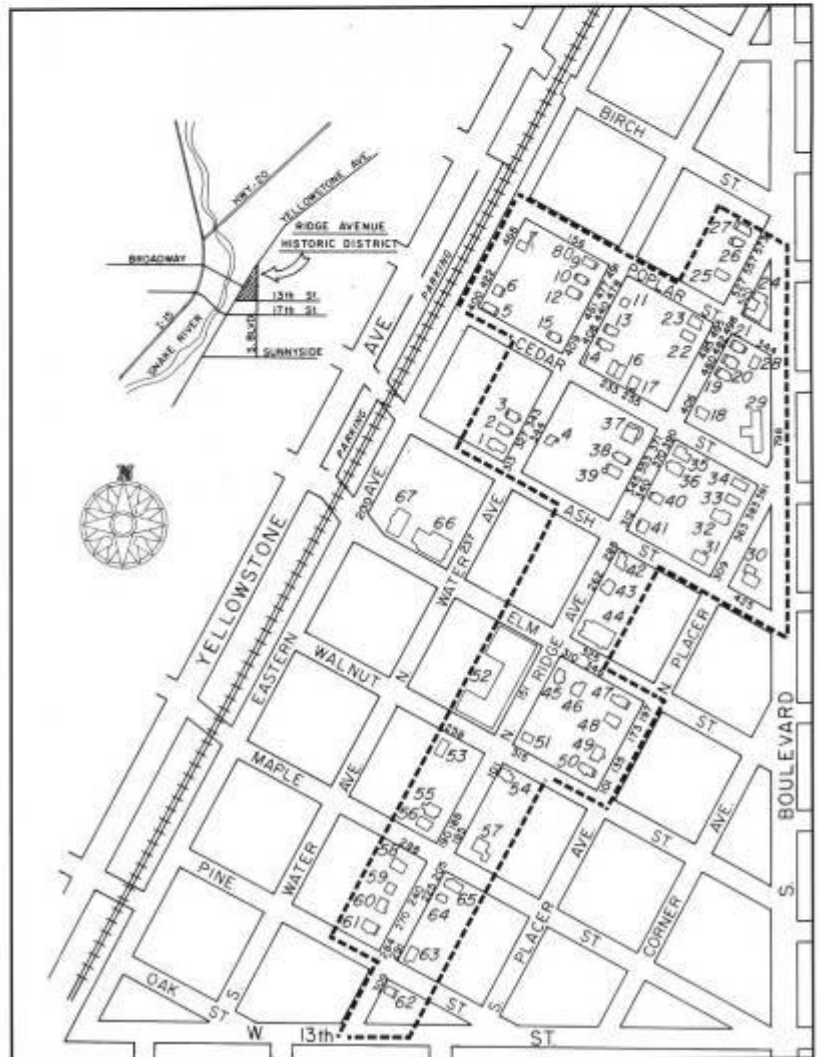
**51. 315 Walnut Street.** This is another one of the earliest homes built east of the Oregon Short Line railroad. The home has a basalt foundation and is constructed of rock faced irregular coursed stone. There are quoins at the corners of the building and segmental arches over the windows and doors. This early home was probably built by P.B. VanBlaricom, a harness maker, in 1896-97.

**52. 151 North Ridge Avenue.** The O.E. Bell Junior High School was designed by Sundberg and Sundberg, southeastern architects who worked primarily in Prairie, Art Deco and Art Moderne styles, and built by Reed Construction Company of Pocatello. The first wing was begun in 1928 and opened in 1930. When the north section was begun in 1935, the big canvas closing off the completed portion of the structure did not prevent the cold winter winds from whistling through the hallways. The north section was opened in January, 1937. This brick building has terra cotta door surrounds and terra cotta pinnacles with crockets at the decorative parapet.



**53. 258 Walnut Street.** A. D. Morrison built this imposing stone home with basalt foundation in 1896. It is a fine example of vernacular architecture with Colonial Revival influences of Paladin windows, segmental arching, and an inset porch with massive square columns. Morrison was the local manager of the Chicago based Great Western Canal and Improvement Company, which encouraged the settlement of the New Sweden Irrigation District. The second occupant of the home was Claude C. Campbell, president of Anderson Brothers Bank.

**290 Walnut Street.** This home was built for Nils Hoff around the turn of the century. Although the





original side porches have been removed or enclosed, the front window retains an entablature with simple frieze. Nils Hoff was the owner of Nils Hoff Grain and Coal Co. Ltd.

**54. 101 South Ridge Avenue.** Although the exterior siding has been altered, the original massing and design of this Queen Anne remains. This home was built between 1905 and 1911. The first occupant was O.J. Ellis, the assistant cashier at The State Bank.

**55. 188 South Ridge Avenue.** Carl Nation, manager, Sanitary Cash Grocery Company, was the first occupant of this Colonial Revival with portico and multi-pane windows. The corner boards have been carved to resemble Doric columns.

**56. 190 South Ridge Avenue.** Guy and Ethyl Smith built this Mission Revival home with arched porch opening, wide overhanging eaves, and ribbons of windows in 1917. Guy Smith was a dentist.

**57. 185 South Ridge Avenue.** This brick home influenced by Tudor Revival styles was first occupied by Rollin C. Scott, owner of Geo. M. Scott and Sons, a stationery store.



**58. 288 Maple Street.** Kate and Bowen Curley built this locally rare and impressive example of Shingle style. The exterior wall materials on the first floor are stone and basalt and wood shingles on the second floor. While Kate favored the stone which faces Ridge and Maple, Bowen favored the basalt which is found on the other two sides of the home. Bowen Curley was president of American National Bank and served as mayor of Idaho Falls in 1902-03 and 1911-1913. Kate Curley was president of the Village Improvement Society, a group of community women organized to improve appearance and quality of life in early Idaho Falls. She was president of the school board the year of her death.

**59. 240 South Ridge Avenue.** Ethyl Smith, daughter of Kate and Bowen Curley, constructed this two-story Colonial Revival in the early 1920's.

**60. 270 South Ridge Avenue.** This unusual and fine example of Queen Anne with classical detailing was first occupied by C. Fred Chandler. It was built between 1903 and 1905. Note the cut-away bay window and two fan lights on the dormers.

**61. 284 South Ridge Avenue.** Arthur W. Holden, an attorney with Holden and Eckhardt, built this bungalow with hipped roof between 1903 and 1905. The 1905 Sanborn insurance map notes that it has a wood shingle exterior.

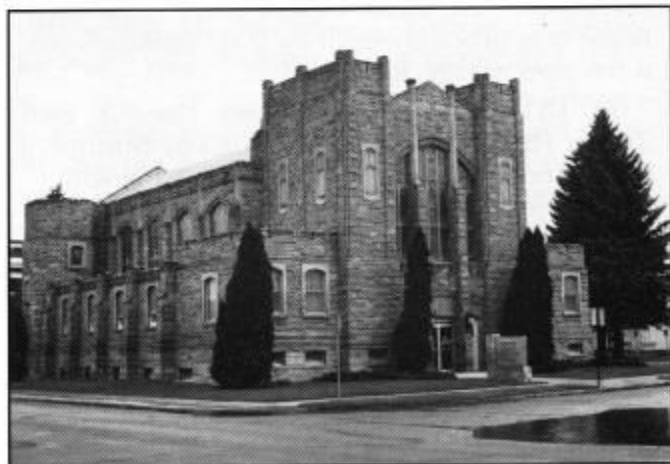
**62. 309 South Ridge Avenue.** Louis A. Hartert built this good example of Queen Anne with classical details around 1903. Hartert was the partner of Johannsen and Hartert, real estate and loans.

**63. 291 South Ridge Avenue.** L. O. Naylor, manager of N. O. Taylor Company, Studebaker Motor Cars, was the first occupant of this excellent example of Colonial Revival built in 1916. Note the portico with columns and the fanlight over the door and four side lights. It has beveled wood siding with corner boards.

**257 South Ridge Avenue.** D. B. Bybee built this home and boarding house in 1901. Originally it was a 1 1/2 story stone structure with a frame addition added around 1915. Bybee was the proprietor of The Idaho Saloon. The second occupant of the home was Addison V. Scott, real estate, insurance, and loans. Mrs. Scott was the first woman justice of peace in the State of Idaho and served as one of the first trustees of the local school district.

**64. 225 South Ridge Avenue.** This first occupant of this excellent example of Queen Anne with classical detailing was Bertha Anderson. It was built around 1903. The second occupant was Benjamin R. Crandall, superintendent of Idaho Falls City schools. Frank E. Lord, principal of Riverside School, was a boarder at Crandalls' home.

**65. 205 South Ridge Avenue.** Around 1918, Louis and Phoebe Hartert built this fine example of Prairie style with its massive porch supports and ribbons of windows. According to the Sanborn insurance maps, this home replaced a smaller one built earlier on this lot. At the time of construction, Hartert was the president of Louis A. Hartert and Company, real estate, insurance, and loans.



**66. 237 North Water Avenue.** The Trinity Methodist Church was built in 1916-17 in Tudor-Gothic style of local stone quarried north of Heise. The vertical lines in the design are created by stone buttresses and pilasters. There is a stone



Celtic cross in the gable and the front, celestory, and aisle windows are stained glass. The church was listed on the National Register in the late 1970's.

**67. North Eastern Avenue and Elm.** The Bonneville Museum, which was formerly the Idaho Falls Public Library, was completed in 1916 with \$15,000 in assistance from the Andrew Carnegie Corporation. The library was originally built in Neo-Classical style. It was one of the major projects of the Village Improvement Society. In 1938-40, the Public Works Administration added the fine Art Deco additions, including the present entrance. The building was included on the National Register in 1984.

Early city directories, Sanborn insurance maps, documents recorded in the office of the Bonneville County Recorder's Office and track index records of Idaho Land and Title were sources of the information provided in this pamphlet.

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